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EUROPEAN TRADE UNION COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATION
COMITE SYNDICAL EUROPEEN DE L'EDUCATION



Report from the Second Regional Seminar on

Third-Party Violence in the Education Sector:

Social Partners in Education concerned about Violence
in Schools: *“How to Prevent and Mitigate Third-Party
Violence and Harassment in Schools”*.

If you feel safe at your work as a teacher your students feel the same

Brussels, 7 June 2012



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DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.*



Egalement disponible en français sous le titre

« Rapport 2e Séminaire régional du projet : Les partenaires sociaux du secteur de l'éducation préoccupés par la violence dans les établissements scolaires: « Comment prévenir et atténuer la violence de tiers et le harcèlement dans les établissements scolaires » »

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Third-party violence in the Education Sector – Second Regional Seminar

1. Introduction

Teacher Trade Union representatives and members from the employer organisation European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE) met at the second regional seminar, which took place in Brussels on 7 June 2012. The seminar pertains to a series of activities within the ETUCE/EFEE project Third-Party Violence in the education sector: Social Partners in Education concerned about Violence in Schools: “How to Prevent and Mitigate Third-Party Violence and Harassment in Schools”.

Further events organised are the first regional seminar in Warsaw on 26 April 2012 and the project closing conference to take place in Cyprus on 27 to 28 September 2012. The activities in the seminars are aimed at preparing an implementation guide about how to prevent and mitigate third-party violence in the education sector.

This joint ETUCE/EFEE project supports the implementation in the education sector of the Multi-sectoral Guidelines to Tackle Third-Party Violence and Harassment Related to Work, which were signed on 30 September 2010, by the European Social Partners in education, local government, hospital, private security and commerce sectors, represented by ETUCE, EFEE, EPSU, CEMR, UNI-EUROPA, HOSPEEM, COESS and EUROCOMMERCE¹.

The aim of the multi-sectoral guidelines is to ensure that each workplace has a results-oriented policy, which addresses the issue of third-party violence. The guidelines set out the practical steps that can be taken by employers, workers and their representatives/trade unions to reduce and prevent third-party violence.



2. Third-Party Violence - Definition

Third-party violence is a form of violence and harassment. The European Agency for Occupational Safety and Health (EU-OSHA) defines third party violence as “physical violence, verbal aggression, or the threat of physical violence where the aggressor is not a work colleague, e.g. the person, customer, client or patient receiving the goods or services”². Violence towards a teacher from e.g. a student or parent would thus be considered to be third party violence. As such it is an occupational health and safety hazard, covered by EU legislation³.

¹ http://teachersosh.homestead.com/Publications/Final_Multi_sectoral_guidelines_rev_EN.pdf.

² EU-OSHA (2011): “Workplace Violence and Harassment: a European Picture”, <http://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/reports/violence-harassment-TERO09010ENC>, 2009, p.132.

³ The European Framework Directive on Safety and Health at Work, Directive 89/391 EEC, 12 June 1989, on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:1990:275:0042:0042:EN:PDF>.

Examining cases of third-party violence, there are two aspects to be considered; firstly, the violence aspect and secondly, the aspect of a third party. The violence aspect seems obvious to explain as aggression, which can be both, physical and/or verbal. The second aspect of a third party is a more complex concept and grounds on a legal concept: A third party is a person outside the relationship between two parties (people) that are legally bound by a contract, e.g. an employment contract.

In other words, an employer, e.g. the local education authority or a head teacher, would be considered the first party. The second party is thus the employee e.g. a teacher, educator or member of school staff. Therefore parents, pupils or members of the wider public, etc. would be considered as third party.

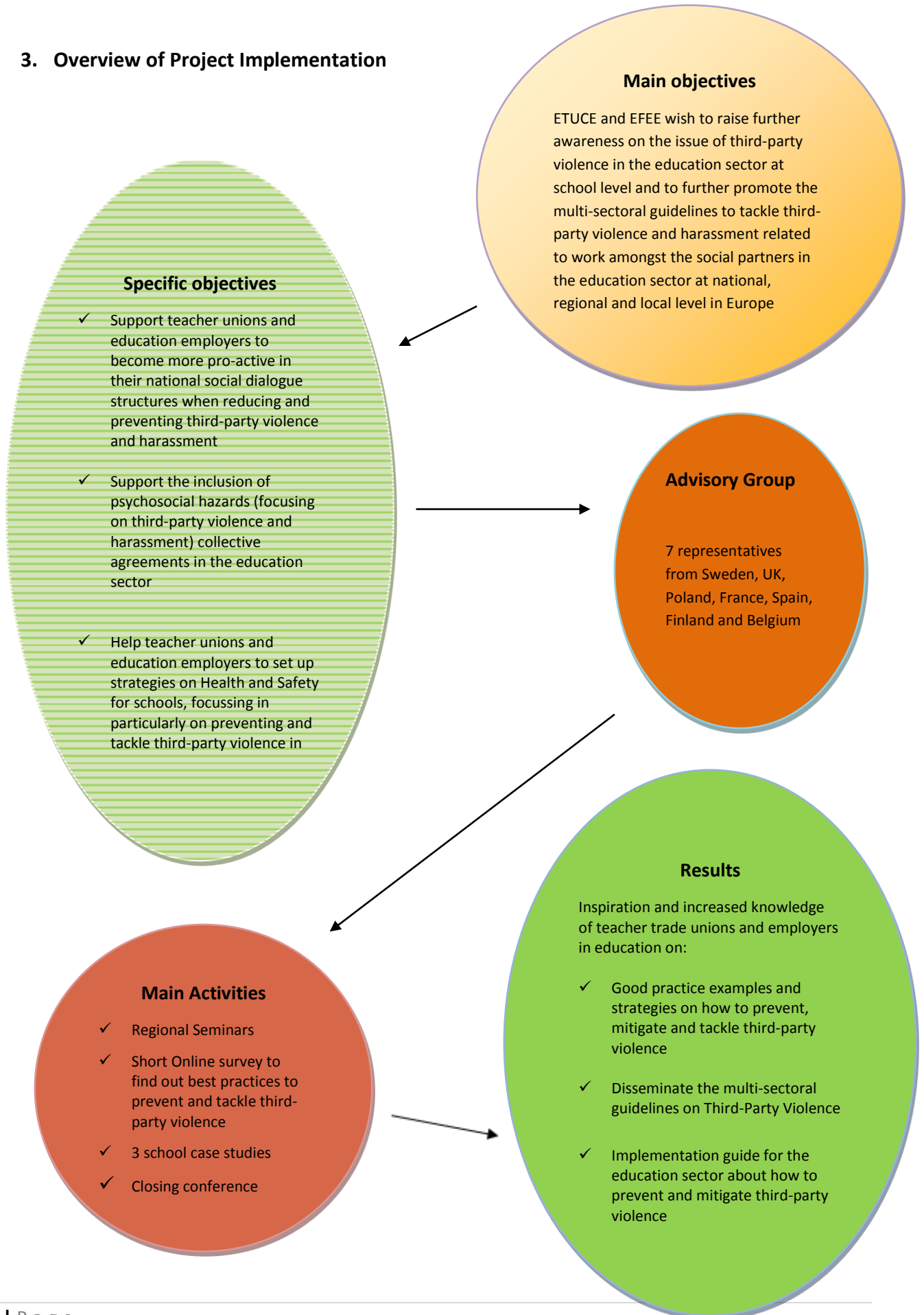
In the first regional seminar the participants identified the specificities of third-party violence in the education sector that distinguish the impact of third-party violence on teaching staff from its impact on personnel in other sectors. These differences explain why it is necessary to address the issue of third-party violence in the education sector in particular. Amongst these reasons, the participants found:

- ✓ The role of teaching staff - violent acts committed against teaching staff due to the simple fact that a person is a teacher, educator or works in the education field
- ✓ Tension for teaching staff as provider of education and at the same time evaluator of student's performance
- ✓ Long-term relationship (pupils and their respective parents/family)
- ✓ Education as a public good and a legal obligation - students cannot be banned from school as customers/clients might be from shops

The Multi-Sectoral Guidelines to Tackle Third-Party Violence and Harassment⁴ related to work explain further that third-party violence could be one-off incidents or more systematic patterns of behaviour, by an individual or group, originating from the actions or behaviour of clients, customers, patients, service users, pupils or parents, member of the public or the service provider. It can be motivated by emotional reasons, personal dislike, prejudices on grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion and belief, disability, age, sexual orientation and body image. It can constitute criminal offences aimed at the employee and his/her reputation or the property of the employer or client which may be organised or opportunistic and which require the intervention of public authorities. It can deeply affect the personality, dignity and integrity of the victims and occur at the work place, in the public space or in the private environment and is work related.

⁴ The document can be found in 25 EU languages at: <http://www.eurocommerce.be/content.aspx?PageId=41864>.

3. Overview of Project Implementation



4. Advisory Group

An Advisory Group guiding the project implementation and composed of representatives from five teacher unions and two EFEE representatives:



Monika Konczyk
NASUWT, UK



Anders Eklund
Läraryrbundet
Sweden



Jennifer Moses
NASUWT, UK



Patricio Perez
FECCOO, Spain



Hélène Hemet
UNSA
France



Stéphane
Vanoirbeck
SEGEC



Pauliina
Tervahartiala
AFST

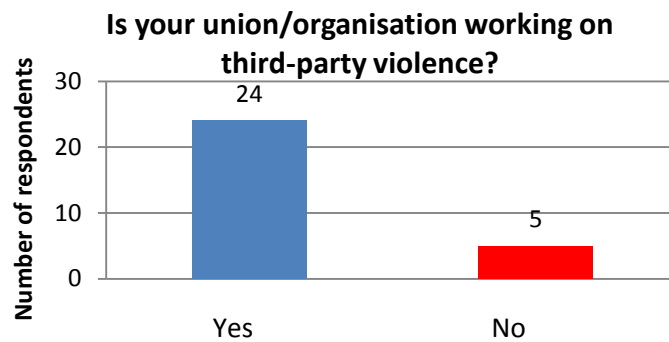
In view of identifying best practice examples of how third-party violence is dealt with in schools, the advisory group has been responsible for establishing contact with selected schools in Sweden, Poland and Spain, which has resulted in three case studies.

5. Second Regional Seminar

The seminar gathered 28 representatives respectively from ETUCE member organisations and EFEE. The aims of the second regional seminar were to increase the awareness of third-party violence in schools among the member organisations and for the participants to identify potential measures on how to deal with third-party violence in school and to exchange good practices.

Presentation of the results of the online survey on third-party violence, carried out between 10 February – 16 April 2012, amongst the ETUCE and EFEE members provided the participants with an idea of the situation on third-party violence in schools, concerning the implementation of legislation and prospective obstacles in recognising and tackling third-party violence⁵.

⁵ Further survey results can be found on the ETUCE OSH website : www.edu-osh.eu.



Nadia Elhaggagi, the European Commission, DG Employment, was invited to speak in the seminar on the Commission’s view on tackling third-party violence. She emphasised the importance of dealing with the topic in terms of the multi-sectoral guidelines, and encouraged the participants and the advisory group to keep up the good work. She also highlighted that, even though measures to tackle third-party violence are identified, implementing them in schools in Member States will be the most challenging part, hence encouraging the seminar participants to be aware of that aspect as well.

A round table discussion on the prevention of third-party violence was initiated with Christine Jakob from EPSU and Joël Olive, school head teacher from Paris. Christine Jakob reported the project: *Third-party violence at work – a multi-sectoral approach by European social partners*; a project following negotiations on the European Cross-sectoral Agreement on Violence and Harassment and the Autonomous Framework Agreement on Violence and Harassment. Since third-party violence often takes place in public sectors (health care, public administration, education, social work) the project aimed at increasing awareness of third-party violence and to create guidelines to identify, prevent, manage and tackle problems of work related harassment and violence by third parties. Christine Jacob explained that employers are obliged to carry out risk assessments and to identify threats to employees at their workplace, but often third-party violence is not a part of the legal framework followed by the employers. She presented the multi-sectoral guidelines to tackle third-party violence, and followed up with highlighting some important elements for a future policy framework building on the multi-sectoral guidelines. Among them were a clear definition of third party violence, prevention through staff training including third-party violence, evaluation on a regular basis and incorporation of trade unions and social partners. She encouraged the participants to make use of such a policy framework, expressing that “*At some point, there are limits to the exchange of good practices, so the multi-sectoral guidelines are of real European added value*”.

Joël Olive reported his experiences with third-party violence during his working life as a head teacher for a school located in a suburb of Paris. From his point of view, schools are dealing with three types of violence: violence from outside the school, violence within the school, and violence through technical remedies (cyber harassment). He assessed that 10% of violence cases are third party violence, and that the remaining 90% concern student-to-student violence. He expressed the need for structural policies when combating third-party violence and gave examples of preventive measures implemented in his school. For instance, groups and committees dealing with third-party violence have been established, to identify unusual situations, has been increased, and disciplinary groups addressed at students, have been formed. He also emphasised the importance of a legal culture concerning third-party violence in schools, and encouraged the actual implementation of existing legislation. The change in education, especially concerning the

increasing diversity of students, was also brought up. According to Joel olive the educational system needs to keep up with changes in society in order to accommodate this increase in diversity in classrooms.

In the frame of the project, the advisory group carried out three case studies to schools selected by members of the advisory group to examine and learn from their strategy on the prevention of third-party violence.

6. Case studies

The case-studies were all presented by different members of the advisory group.

6.1 Poland

Two schools were visited in Gdynia, Poland, the secondary school *ogólnokształcące* N° 5 and the school No 14. The characteristics of the schools were very different, one being rather small with limited resources and with a majority of female students, the other a much bigger school placed in an area with a wealthy population.

The measures established to tackle violence also varied between the two schools. The first school was keen on suppressing violence, both among the students, but also third-party violence, and had established a good contact with social services and also employed a psychologist associated with the school. However, with limited resources and poor support from parents the school found it hard to implement preventive measures.

In the second school, parents were more supportive of preventive policies, and the school also had a policy document on tackling violence and harassment with specific measures depending on the age group of the students. In addition, workshops on the prevention of cyber harassment had been launched for both students and teaching personnel. The students in the second school were also more aware of the different kinds of violence in school, including third-party violence.

All in all the advisory group members concluded that preventive measures were existing at both schools, but that concrete measures to tackle third-party violence were not in place yet.

6.2 Spain

One school was chosen for a case study in Spain. It is an average-sized school with students from medium and low socio-economic backgrounds. The school had experienced serious problems with drug trafficking in and outside the school, which had been the cause of many episodes of violence. The school also had problems with harassment of especially female teachers experiencing sexist behaviour from male students.

The school had identified three kinds of violence: student to student, student to teacher and parent to teacher. Many resources had been used to develop and implement preventive measures in order to avoid third-party violence and violence in general, among them arts and craft workshops, sports projects, student assistant groups etc. The school had also invented what so-called “convivencia”-classrooms or “co-

existence”-classrooms. The convivencia-classrooms are attended by students due to their disrespect or specific incidents, which are communicated to the parents. Volunteer teachers also attend the convivencia-classrooms to be in charge of activities. The project is coordinated by the school counsellor. The school had also established good contacts with stakeholders outside the school, such as the parents association, the police and local educational and social authorities.

In general the school had taken up many measures to prevent third-party violence.

6.3 Sweden

Two schools were visited in Sweden: Sunnerby, in Sorunda, Nynäshamn with an average size of 360 students and Fryhuset in Stockholm, a little smaller with only 180 students.

In the past, the first school had experienced severe cases of violence, often causing teacher absence due to the bad working environment. Based on the rising figures of illness and work-related accidents among teachers, an insurance company for teachers, run by social partners, offered the school to be part of a project, called Safeschool, with the aims of mitigating and preventing third-party violence. A sociologist led the project, being able to see the relationship between students and teachers from a different point a view. Through observations, good practices on how to avoid third-party violence, e.g. that all teachers apply the same scale of punishments for incidents of disrespect of school rules or disruptive behaviours, were developed. This has helped to grow a very different atmosphere in the school. The school even developed a new identity, making it an attractive place to be an employee for the teachers.

The second school also functioned as a youth centre with different cultural, educational and sports programmes. This means that students and teachers and other employees spend many hours with each other every day, not only within the traditional educational settings, but also in their leisure time. To make this work, the school had specific rules for student behaviour and also informed the parents of the prevailing standards, which the student will have to follow when attending activities in the school. The schools structure had clearly improved the relationship between students and teachers compared to other schools. It gives the students the opportunity to experience their teacher as more than only a classroom authority, and also enables the teacher to get to know a student’s qualities outside the school context.

7. Implementation and policy formulation

In the seminar the participants were asked to discuss the implementation of the multi-sectoral guidelines to tackle third-party violence and harassment related to work in the education sector. All participants agreed that third-party violence occurs in schools, less frequently in a physical form, but on a large scale through cyber-harassment and the social media. The participants also found that legislation in the area of third-party violence is either non-existent, or as one participant expressed: *“it’s more a paper-policy, than something actually being implemented in schools”*. In order to better implement policies and really make them work teachers and staff should be involved in the policy formulation. Also, no one-sided practice will fit all schools in Europe; there must be room for flexibility. Specific training in tackling third-party violence



could be included in the initial teacher education, and new teachers should also be prepared for the diversity, both socially and intellectually, which you experience in a classroom today.

8. Abbreviations

CEMR - Council of European Municipalities and Regions

COESS - Confederation of European Security Services

EFEE – European Federation of Education Employers

EFTA – European Free Trade Association

EPSU – European federation of Public Service Unions

ETUCE – European Trade Union Committee for Education

EU – European Union

UNI-EUROPA – European trade union federation representing workers in service sectors, such as private security, commerce etc.

EUROCOMMERCE -Represents the Retail, Wholesale and International Trade Representation to the EU.

HOSPEEM - European Hospital and Healthcare Employers' Association



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